

A Little Less Quiet

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Summary: An exploration of Hiccup and Astrid and how they become engaged one week after the events of HTTYD2. Features the Hoffersons, Valka, and Toothless.

A Little Less Quiet

Apparently I love posting HTTYD stories with new laptops. This one is set after the second movie, and theoretically could work with "Focus, Hiccup." Enjoy!_

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><p>"So, babe, huh?" said Hiccup, putting his head onto Astrid's shoulder as he encircled her body with his from behind.<p>

"Ye-yeah," she chuckled, surprised, before sinking into his warmth. They were situated on what was becoming their cliff point â€“ one of the many islands Hiccup and Toothless had discovered during their explorations. It had the more fortunate name of Bellyrub Point, thanks to Toothless. The cliff overlooked a meadow filled with wildflowers which flowed into the icy ocean.

It had been a week since the defeat of Drago and the display of Alpha status by Toothless. Since then, Hiccup had been inundated with chief duties, preparing for the sjaund, which was the funeral feast where they would drink the funeral ale in honour of Stoick, as well as the repairing of Berk from the previous Alpha's destruction. This was the first time since that Hiccup had had time to breathe and just relax, and the first time in over a week he had had time alone with Astrid.

"It kind of slipped out â€“ d'you mind," she continued, with uncharacteristic shyness. He hugged her closer, "Of course not â€“ I

just know that we've tended to keep things pretty quiet around others." His girlfriend turned to look at him.

"What if we made things a little lessâ€| quiet?" she asked, daring him with her eyes.

Hiccup gave a brilliant smile. "So you wouldn't mind making an announcement after tonight?" he inquired, the light in his eyes dimming just a fraction at the mention of his father's death. In response, Astrid punched him and then leaned up and kissed him hard.

Hiccup, despite the multitude of punches that often accompanied the experience, always loved kissing Astrid â€" it was the most freeing and exciting experience after flying and he always felt like the only one who mattered when she kissed him â€" a heady experience for someone once known as "Hiccup the Useless".

Minutes later, or it could have been hours, Hiccup wasn't sure, they broke apart. "Astrid, to make this official â€" and to ensure my mother doesn't kill me if she finds out I didn't actually askâ€""", Astrid sighed, rolled her eyes and punched Hiccup on the shoulder again, indicating to him that he was ramblingâ€| again. "Will you marry me?" he finished with hardly a wince at the punch, pulling her impossibly closer.

Astrid half-turned to face Hiccup and lifted her hands to thread through his hair. She smiled as she felt the braids she had put in Hiccup's hair almost two weeks ago. "Yes," she answered softly, kissing him again.

The last four years with Hiccup had been an eye-opener for Astrid (because honestly, it took forever for Hiccup to wake up after his encounter with the Green Death and it took another few months after that to get past the awkwardness and actually get together) in terms of being in a real, mature relationship. It took time but she had finally become confident in being both a woman (especially when with Hiccup) and a fearless, tough Viking with killer aim and now even better flying skills. Hiccup also had to learn how to deal with Astrid and to become more confident in his battle skills and his leadership abilities. Now, their relationship was balanced and neither held more power over the other, they worked together as a team.

All of a sudden, they fell backwards, Astrid landing hard on Hiccup. Toothless, unwilling to be a participant in their silent celebration, had moved off in a huff, joining Stormfly by the brook. "Oof," grunted Hiccup as the air was squashed out of him. He had forgotten that Toothless had situated himself behind his rider. "Thanks, buddy," he called out sarcastically. "Really appreciate that!"

"Sorry," laughed Astrid as she wiggled and turned, accidentally elbowing him in the ribs. Face to face with her boyf-_fiancÃ©_, she grinned lasciviously and lowered her head, "Now where were we?"

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They returned to Berk several hours later, with flushed faces (from

the wind, if anyone asks) and swollen lips (bee stings, if anyone asks).

After dismounting at the main dragon stables, unsaddling their dragons, and topping up their supplies of fish and water, Astrid and Hiccup meandered over to the Dragon Training ring, where Valka was most likely to be. Since her return to Berk, Hiccup's mother had thrown herself into teaching her son about being a chief and in her spare time learning about the Dragon Training Academy. Astrid was more than happy to teach Valka everything about Berk's Academy, as she, more so than Hiccup (who was always off exploring the world), had really run the training programmes for Berk's younger residents.

As they approached the Ring, Hiccup slung an arm over Astrid's shoulders and, pressing his lips up against her right ear, murmured, "You're so beautiful." Astrid suppressed a shiver and rolled her eyes at Hiccup's cheesiness and elbowed him lightly in response.

"Please, Hiccup."

"It's true," Hiccup protested with a smile. Astrid always refused compliments about her appearance. The only thing she ever wanted recognition for was her Viking skills â€“ which now include flying, thanks to Hiccup.

Astrid rolled her eyes again and broke ahead of her fiancÃ©, wanting to tell Valka the good news as soon as possible. Hiccup strolled along behind her with a fond smile. His thoughts turned inwards to the latest project he was working on when he had a spare minute â€“ which, admittedly, was limited. He was hoping to create a new method of irrigating the field, so to increase the grain production for the long winters. Ideally he'd have a test model to implement in one of the fields for this winter, but with all the changes in his schedule, he didn't think it would happen until next year. To be honest, if it weren't for Toothless, Astrid, and his mother, Hiccup didn't think he'd survive all the new responsibilities that come with being chief. He kind of wished that he had listed to his father's attempts at advice more â€“ maybe he wouldn't feel like such a grounded dragon then. There was so much more to being chief than he'd previously thought â€“ not only did Hiccup have to lead the monthly meetings on the welfare of Berk, but he had to ensure the larders and cellars were full, settle major disputes, negotiate trades with neighbouring islands, ensure repairs were being completed on time, and much, much more. It was exhausting.

"Hiccup," cried Valka with a joyful wave, as he entered the ring opposite from where his mother and Astrid were standing. From the huge grins on both women's faces, Hiccup surmised that Astrid had already told Valka the good news. He didn't mind; the less awkward stuttering of their plans, the better.

"Congratulations, sweetie," beamed his mother as Hiccup drew up to the two women. He grinned in response and slid his arm around Astrid's narrow waist. She had slowly become more comfortable with public displays of affection â€“ it had taken a while for Astrid to accept that showing her love for Hiccup did not make her appear weak. And if any dared think so, Astrid didn't hesitate to set them straight with her axe.

"Thanks, Mom," he continued, smiling brighter as he felt Astrid's hand slide up and scratch his upper back lightly — a small sign of affection she'd developed after about a year of dating.

"I suppose we'll have to make the announcement tomorrow," his mother said thoughtfully, turning to pick up a curious and nuzzling Terrible Terror.

"Maybe the day after," suggested Astrid. "I have a feeling the majority of Berk's residents will be sleeping off all that mead tomorrow," she continued with a smirk and a sideways glance at Hiccup.

He rolled his eyes and pouted. "Hilarious, Astrid."

His mother looked confused so Astrid elaborated. "Hiccup here really can't hold his drink." Her smirk was gleeful. Valka laughed gently. "I never was a huge drinker either," she admitted.

"Thanks, Mom," said Hiccup gratefully as he felt his cheeks heat with embarrassment. He turned to Astrid "And I've gotten better," he protested half-heartedly. He really didn't need his mother to know how un-Viking-like he really was, despite the fact that she was pretty non-Viking as well. Still. Drinking was a major part of the Viking lifestyle and Hiccup could never handle more than a cup of mead or a tankard of ale.

"True," Astrid allowed. "You've stopped rambling about everything under the sun after that first drink," she continued ruthlessly. Hiccup sighed, recalling the last time he had too much to drink (otherwise known as a tankard of ale) — he rhapsodized about the differences in materials for flying harnesses for the entire night — much to the chagrin of Astrid and his friends.

"Thank you for bringing that up," he deadpanned.

"You're welcome," laughed Astrid. Hiccup's sarcastic sense of humour was finally returning full-force.

"Come on, you," said Hiccup, tugging on his girlfriend in an effort to prevent more embarrassing stories from being told. "Let's go talk to your father."

Astrid's face sobered up. "Right," she muttered. "That'll be fun." She took a deep breath, squared her shoulders, and started off towards the Hofferson residence.

"Good luck, dearies," called out Valka with a smile. They were going to need it.

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"Will it really be that bad?" asked Hiccup softly, with a squeeze of his fiancée's hand as he caught up to the blonde Viking.

Astrid sighed. "You've met my father," she said in response, scowling.

"Well — yeah. But that was when I was Hiccup the Useless. Now I hear I'm quite the catch," he joked. Astrid again elbowed

him.

"Stop calling yourself that!" she reprimanded. "And yes â€“ while you're now a 'catch'" she said, sarcasm evident in her voice, "You're still taking away his daughter," she smirked at Hiccup's paling face.

"Oh. I hadn't thought of it like that," replied Hiccup nervously. Though to be honest, he still was a little surprised â€“ Astrid and her father's relationship was tumultuous at best. Not that he would bring that up â€“ he didn't have a death wish anymore. At least, he was pretty sure he didn't.

But it was as if Astrid read his mind. "I know Father and I haven't always had aâ€œ good relationship," she started with a scowl. "But I still love and respect him and I know it'll be hard without his daughter at home to help around the house and maintain order." Her parents had been surprised with late-born twins â€“ the Terrible Terrors as Astrid not-so-jokingly referred to them as â€“ who were now two years old. At any given moment, either Calder or Stian would be in the midst of destroying something or another. The other day Astrid had come home to find that they had somehow set fire to the family heirloom trunk; considering how a dragon had yet to accomplish that feat, the Hoffersons were at a loss to understand how the twins had accomplished it.

Astrid's father was especially pleased that he finally had a son â€“ two! â€“ to carry on the Hofferson name. Astrid was slightly hurt by this (not that anyone besides Hiccup and Stormfly knew that) since she had spent so much of her childhood and teen years trying to be the toughest Viking in Berk in order to impress her father. She shook off those thoughts and focused back on their conversation. "Besides, as chief you'll have the prestige and best mundr of any other suitor," she attempted to joke, but failing.

Hiccup scowled (yet another one of Astrid's influences, he thought) at the reminder of the bride-price. Stupid concept. "Yeah. Though to be honest, I would pay anything to ensure your father gave you away to me," he admitted. Astrid rolled her eyes (Hiccup privately thought that her eyes would stay rolled up there if she continued with that habit) but looked pleased.

The young couple grew quiet as they approached Astrid's family home. They walked up to the front door and Astrid took a deep breath before pushing open the large wooden door. "Hello?" she called out.

"Astrid!" called out her mother from the kitchen area. She crossed the large, open-space main floor towards the front door. She took in Hiccup's presence and smiled. "Your father is out back," she said, glancing at their entwined hands. Astrid blushed faintly.

"Thanks, Mother," she said, dragging Hiccup off to talk with her father.

They crossed through the house and entered out back, where their family dragons' homes were kept. Her father was mucking out the living areas, while simultaneously keeping an eye on his sons as they played in a pen. Normally Berk children weren't kept so confined, but these two were so likely to get into danger that Mrs. Hofferson felt

it necessary to pen them when she and her husband were too busy to keep close watch.

"Astrid!" greeted her father when he caught sight of the couple approaching. "Chief Haddock," he continued, nodding towards Hiccup. He wiped his bushy brow and set down his shovel.

"Please," blushed Hiccup. "Just Hiccup," he said, still not used to the title. Especially from Astrid's father.

"Alright," he agreed, bemused. "Is there a reason you're both here?" he asked gruffly, crossing his thick arms in an attempt to display dominance.

"Yes," stated Astrid, squeezing Hiccup's hand hard as a signal to begin his request.

"Sir," began Hiccup nervously. He took a deep, steadying breath and continued. "I request your daughter, Astrid's hand in marriage. I love her and will provide for her for all of her days."

"I see," said Mr. Hofferson, keeping his arms crossed, but losing the tension built up in his massive shoulders. He wanted to rub his face thoughtfully but his hands were covered in shit so he resisted the temptation. "Do you have a bride-price in mind?" he asked pointedly, wanting to make things difficult for the boy, but at the same time being cognizant that this was likely his only chance to marry off his hot-tempered daughter. He loved her, truly, but she was so difficult to live with!

Hiccup nodded. "I am prepared to offer the traditional mundr for a chief's wife plus absorb the costs for moving Stormfly over to the chief's dragon housing," he added. The look of astonishment that appeared on his future father-in-law's face " before being schooled into indifference " gave Hiccup a sense of pleasure. It wasn't often someone took Hofferson the Bloodthirsty by surprise.

"Very well," he acquiesced. That bride-price would definitely pay for all the repairs to the house for the next few years! he thought excitedly. "Shall we go inside and draw up the contract?" he offered. Hiccup nodded in agreement. Astrid made to follow them but her father stayed her with an open palm. "Astrid, finish mucking out the stalls," he ordered before leading her fiancÃ© away. Hiccup left her with a look of apology, as he followed her father into the house.

Astrid fumed. She was irritated by her father's unwillingness to include her in her own marriage negotiations and it showed in the viciousness by which she shoveled the manure in the harvest wagons for fertilizer. Never mind that Hiccup would tell her everything later, Astrid just wanted to be involved. At least in her marriage, Astrid knew she would be an equal partner. She and Hiccup had had a few discussions over the last few months about what they'd like in a marriage and thankfully they were both in agreement. Having grown up without a mother, Hiccup hadn't been exposed to the traditional male-female dynamics in the chief's household, and had performed just as many 'female' tasks as not. Astrid was more than happy to share the burden of all the unwanted household chores and be equal in the decisions made about their family. She understood that Hiccup's chief duties would largely remain his domain, but she secretly anticipated

being able to help with those as well.

By the time she had finished her father's chore and had brought in her brothers, her father and fianc  were wrapping up the marriage contract. They had even summoned their witnesses, including Hiccup's Uncle Spitelout and Gobber, and they were signing the contract when Astrid collapsed next to Hiccup. Hiccup smiled lovingly at her and Astrid glared in response for such a sappy public display of affection. Hiccup rolled his eyes at her and turned back to his witnesses and father-in-law. He knew better than to hint to others that Astrid may actually have a soft side, but he couldn't help it. They were getting married! Well, they were negotiating to get married.

"There!" exclaimed Hofferson with triumph as he added the last signature to the contract. "Now, when do you want to perform the marriage ceremony?" he asked expectantly.

Astrid and Hiccup exchanged a glance. "Next Friggas-day," replied Astrid decisively.

"Impossible!" cried her mother. Mrs. Hofferson stomped over towards the group, waving her butchering knife with passion. "That is simply not enough time to put together the bridal dowry! And besides, it's supposed to rain for the next week," she added, as if that was reason enough to postpone a ceremony.

"First of all Mother, we've waited long enough. We want to get married as soon as possible!"

"Yeah, I can think of a reason why," guffawed Eret. He snapped his mouth shut when the others glared at him. Hiccup wondered why he had even asked the foreigner if he wanted to be a witness.

"And the dowry doesn't have to be completed all at once â€“ it's not like I'm leaving the island! And—" Astrid continued, seeing her mother open her mouth to protest again. "Even if it does rain, we can hold the ceremony inside the Hall," she concluded triumphantly.

"But next week?" complained Mrs. Hofferson. She had finally stopped waving around the bloody butchering knife and now was slumped despondently next to her husband on the arm of his great chair.

"Yes," responded Astrid stubbornly. "We've been together for four years, we want to get married as soon as possible."

"Fine," sighed her mother, seeing that her daughter would not budge. As stubborn as she was, Astrid was even more so. But her daughter's resulting grin of happiness made her capitulation worth it.

"Well then, if the wedding is next week â€“ I assume the announcement will be made in the next day or so?" she inquired with a silent nod from Hiccup. "Excellent. Well if the wedding is next week, we have lots to do. Come, Astrid, we have to go to the seamstress while she's still open," she commanded, standing up and heading over to the kitchen to deposit her knife and cooking apron.

"But—" attempted Astrid. She wanted to go flying with Stormfly - her Nadder had been cooped up the last few days as Astrid helped with the

repairs.

"No, dear," said Mrs. Hofferson firmly. "If you want to get married in a week, you have to be prepared to spend the next week getting everything ready. Now say goodbye to your young man." She smiled. "You'll see him tonight at the feast anyways," she added with a chuckle.

Astrid sighed. Her mother was useless for arguments when she got like this. Deciding suddenly that kissing Hiccup was more important than being circumspect, she turned to her fiancÃ© and kissed him hard. Hard enough that Hiccup had a stunned look on his face as she pulled away. She smirked before being yanked back by a recovered Hiccup. "Oh, no you don't," he growled and kissed her deeply.

Mrs. Hofferson gave another chuckle. "Come along, Astrid," she said, pulling her dazed daughter to her feet and out of the house.

Hiccup turned back to the men with a shrug and a lopsided smile. Mr. Hofferson clapped a hand on his shoulder in an uncharacteristic show of friendliness. "Anyone who can put that look on my daughter's face is clearly up to handling her," he said before disappearing back outside. Hiccup figured that was the closest he'd get to approval. He and the rest of the men stood up and let themselves out of the house, parting ways after Hiccup thanked them for their services.

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Hiccup whistled cheerfully all the way up to his house, where he changed tunics and leggings and donned the traditional chieftain gear before making his way up to the Hall for preparations. He was meeting his mother there to go over the procedures of the ceremony. Not that there were many â€“ it largely consisted of everyone drinking in Stoick's honour for the entire night but there were a few things to be observed. He could hardly believe his luck â€“ he was finally getting to marry Astrid! A reality that was once a dream â€“ albeit a particularly unattainable dream to skinny, awkward, bumbling Hiccup.

He met Toothless in the Hall where he'd apparently been annoying everyone while waiting for Hiccup. "Hey, there, bud," he greeted Toothless with affection, rubbing his hand over Toothless's head. Toothless grinned and bounded over to Valka for more attention, his tail wagging everywhere.

"Hiccup! There you are," exclaimed his mother in relief. "Toothless has been very energetic while waiting for you," she smiled, scratching Toothless by the ears when the Night Fury reached her side.

"Sorry, Mom," Hiccup responded. "We hammered out the marriage contract right then and there," he admitted. His mother beamed with pride.

"Well then, you're forgiven," she teased. "Now, come. We need to go over what's expected of you for tonight, then you can go fly and burn off your and Toothless's energy." Hiccup sighed but followed his mother to the dais.

An hour later, since the preparations took longer than expected thanks to Gobber's mishap in the kitchens (he still maintains it was trolls), Hiccup was donning his flight suit and harnessing Toothless.

Hiccup mounted the Night Fury and connected his metal foot into the stirrup. "Come on, Toothless, let's fly!" Together, dragon and rider took to the skies at a dizzying speed. Astrid could hear Hiccup's whoop of excitement from the seamstress's, where her mother had held her hostage for the past few hours. She sighed in envy.

"Focus, Astrid!" reprimanded Astrid's mother, pulling her attention back to the bolts of fabric surrounding the Hofferson women.

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After what seemed like immeasurable hours of torture later, Astrid was free. Unfortunately there wasn't time for her to shake off all the built up tension through flying, so she hurried home to prepare for the sjaund.

She chose her most flattering tunic and least spiky skirt along with the headband that Hiccup had gifted her with last Jul. She normally didn't care much for her appearance, but she wanted to look nice for Hiccup. If anyone questioned her though, they would be staring down the sharp end of her axe. It was no one's business but hers and Hiccup's. Feeling giddy but refusing to let it show, Astrid raced back to the Hall in time to catch Hiccup walking up to the front entrance. His hair was deliciously windblown and his smile was so bright and happy it made her heart beat fast — something she secretly wished never to change. She found herself smiling in return and linked arms with him as they entered the boisterous hall. Almost everyone had already congregated as they were eager to start drinking and honouring Stoick's memory — preferably with as many crazy tales and tankards of alcohol as possible.

"You'll do fine," whispered Astrid encouragingly, before parting ways with her fiancÃ© as he moved up to the chief's seat and she sat with their friends. Hiccup gulped once and faced the crowds. He held up his hands for silence and opened his mouth to begin the traditional rites.

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His speech went very successfully, thank the gods. Everyone was moved by Hiccup's description of Stoick's final act of love for his son, and they held many toasts to his kindness, bravery, and skills as a fighter and chief.

Several hours later and some of the Vikings were close to passing out. Everyone was having a great time, sharing stories and laughing with friends, and the noise level kept climbing and climbing. Hiccup finally had a free moment to himself and collapsed in his seat only to have a weight settle on his good leg. He looked up to find Astrid smiling down at him with a tankard of ale. He took it gratefully to quench his sudden thirst. After taking several large gulps, he set the drink down and slid his arms around Astrid's thin waist, sighing with happiness as he felt her run her fingers through his hair and rub his temples in comfort.

"Feel better?" she asked quietly, almost such that he couldn't hear her.

"Oh yeah," he responded with a slight moan, as she scratched lightly on his scalp. _Odin, that felt good_.

"I have an announshement to make!" suddenly came a voice from the left of the young couple. Astrid's eyes widened as she saw her normally serious father make to stand on top of the wooden table. Everyone turned to look curiously at him. Astrid took that moment to slide off Hiccup's lap and pull him up to stand next to her.

"An announshement, I have," he continued, slurring slightly. "My girl, Astrid Hofferson is marryin' the chief, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III," he cried, accidentally mispronouncing Hiccup's surname and sloshing mead out of his pitcher and onto several unfortunate neighbours.

Everyone, stunned into silence, turned to stare at the furiously blushing young couple, and began to speak excitedly to each other. "When?" bravely yelled a young, spotted teen.

Hiccup cleared his throat. "Next Friggas-day," he replied loudly in order to be heard over the crowd as he slid an arm around Astrid for support. A loud cheer went up from the Vikings. It was another excuse to party, after all.

Then came Snotlout's voice. "Kiss!" he drunkenly demanded of his cousin. "Kiss! Kish! Kissshh!" he continued.

"Yeah," agreed the twins and Fishlegs. "Kiss, kiss, kiss," they began to chant, causing everyone else to join in. Soon enough the entire hall was banging their cups and chanting for the couple to kiss. Even, Hiccup saw with shock, his mother.

Astrid turned to Hiccup. "Well?" she asked mischievously. But before she could do anything, Hiccup swept her into his arms and dipped her into a deep kiss, to the loud joy of Berk's residents. After a long moment in which the twins debated who had the stronger lungs and held a breath-holding contest, which neither won, Hiccup finally brought Astrid back up and released her mouth from his.

"Not bad, Haddock," she said, her mouth rosy red and lips slightly swollen. "Still some room for improvement, though," she continued blithely.

Hiccup grinned and, pulling Astrid so that her body was completely pressed against his and her leg was practically wrapped around his narrow hips, kissed his fiancÃ©e again. Propriety be damned. They were Vikings after all.

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><p>AN: A few things that I tried to include from traditional Viking/Norse culture. A mundr was part of the bride-price (_bruÃ°kaup_), the money that the groom would pay the father for the legal rights over the bride. The other part was known as the morning-gift (_morgen-gifu_) given to the bride, as a payment for her sexual 'willingness'. The last part was the dowry (heiman fylgia)

which she usually retained control over. Jul is a winter holiday that I found when searching for something Christmassy. And a sjaund was a funeral drink that was held one week after someone's death in order to move past it â€“ there was often an accompanying funeral feast of the same name. It was only after the sjaund that the inheritance could be given to the heir. Though, in the movie Hiccup immediately takes over thanks to Gothi. Of course, these were one source each, so if there is a factual error, don't hesitate to let me know!_

_Also, I know Astrid may seem a little softer or different than in the movies - in my mind, because she's around 19/20 years old, she's more mature and that chip on her shoulder is basically gone. _

I hope you enjoyed this exploration of how Hiccup and Astrid could become engaged post-HTTYD2. It'll probably be canon-balled by the time the third movie comes out, but for nowâ€|_

Review please!

~poser16

End
file.